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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/766,250	01/28/2004	Giorgio Bordini	17299	4144

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EXAMINER

SPISICH, GEORGE D

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3616

DATE MAILED: 04/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/766,250	Applicant(s) BORDINI, GIORGIO	
	Examiner George D. Spisich	Art Unit 3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 February 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 12-22 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on January 28, 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference sign(s) mentioned in the description: At the end of page 6 and the beginning of page 7 (at least), there is referenced a central part 2 and 2' in Figure 1a-1b-1c. These reference numerals are missing in these figures. Furthermore, there is reference on page 10, line 3 of the specification "Pa' " in Figure 1c, and Figure 1c still shows "Pa" (as in the prior art). Corrections should be made. Applicant is responsible for checking the consistencies between the specification and Figures to ensure all reference numerals are present and correct. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 2-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 2 is unclear. It is unclear to claim that the front axle produces a two-fold reduction in turning radius by "reducing a wheelbase of a vehicle". There is a limitation to some unknown reference vehicle wheelbase and turning radius which Applicant's invention is compared to. Applicant's invention must be claimed on its own structure and detail. The detail in claim 2 is in the form of a method of changing a prior art suspension arrangement and is inherently unclear as a "prior art" suspension arrangement is not always the same structural arrangement and orientation.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Pond et al. (USPN 6,036,201) provided in Applicant's IDS.

Pond et al. (as best shown in Figures 13 and 14 at least), discloses a suspended, articulated front axle having a central axle portion (extending from and within power transfer unit 80) centered under a central body of the vehicle and arranged to be perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the central body and extending "over a width" of the central body which broadly means a portion of the width of the central body, and two front axle shafts (inherently duplicated on the opposite side of the vehicle in a similar manner), each axle shaft including at least one intermediate shaft portion (82) having a longitudinal axis of symmetry that slopes by a sweep back angle with respect to a line perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of symmetry of the vehicle, wherein the sweep back angle is such that an outer end of the intermediate portion is located further back with respect to an inner end of the intermediate portion in a forward traveling direction of the vehicle.

The suspension of Pond et al. includes top and bottom parallel arms both in the form of a double fork, and connected at their outer ends to a cup-shaped articulated supported (as broadly interpreted). With respect to the limitation that the suspension is swept back at the same angle, it is broadly interpreted that the suspension meets this limitation as the suspension arms accommodate the swept back axle shafts and are at the same swept back angle.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pond et al. (USPN 6,036,201).

Pond et al. discloses a sweep back angle that is shown to produce a different angle between the front wheels (see Figure 14). This difference in angle would produce what is well-known in the art as "differential steering". With respect to providing a two-fold reduction in turning radius, it would be considered to have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to vary the sweep back angle of the front axle intermediate portion to provide the desired reduction in turning radius, since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. In re Boesch, 617 F.2d 272,205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). The maximum value of the sweep back angle as in claim 3, would be considered an desired range also obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

The intermediate portion sloping by the sweep back angle is an intermediate shaft of the axle shaft. The intermediate shaft is connected at one end to an inner shaft (within the power transfer unit 80) by a second joint and at the other end to an outer

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shaft (wheel carrier shaft) by the first transmission joint. The type of joint is not disclosed, although they would appear to be universal joints.

It would have been obvious to use universal joints in the shaft connection as the universal joint is a well know joint in the wheel and axle art and it is within the ordinary skill of one in the art to use a well known structure to transmit the rotative forces to the wheel, while maintaining the ability of the joint to have variable orientations as the universal joint provides.

Claims 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pond et al. (USPN 6,036,201) in view of Osburn et al. (USPN 6,568,696)

Ponds et al. discloses a bottom (86,86a) and top (84,84a) arm connected at their inner ends to a lateral side of a front support member (16) forming part of the vehicle chassis, wherein the front support member supports the central body (either directly or indirectly). The bottom arm is hingeably connected to one end of a fluid actuator (88), the other end of the actuator being connect to the chassis of the vehicle for varying the stiffness of the suspension as a whole. It is also shown that each axle shaft is positioned substantially centrally between the bottom and top arms. However, Ponds et al. does not show an articulated cup shaped support adapted to house a hub carried and the hub carrier being hingeably connect to the articulated support by means of aligned hinges.

Osburn et al. shows an articulated cup shaped support (26) adapted to house a hub carried (24) and the hub carrier being hingeably connect to the articulated support by means of aligned hinges (36A,36B).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the wheel carrier and pivot arrangement of Pond et al. with the articulated hinged wheel carrier arrangement as taught by Osburn et al. so as to provided a stable and durable arrangement for steering and suspending the vehicle.

Response to Arguments

With respect to Applicant's argument that claim 2 clearly claims "reducing a wheelbase of the vehicle" which clearly refers to the wheelbase of the vehicle first mentioned in the preamble of claim 1, Examiner maintains that this is unclear and maintains the rejection. Examiner is unclear if this "reducing of the wheelbase" is of a wheelbase from claim 1, since the sweep back angle is already claimed in claim 1. As stated in the rejection, it is improper to claim a detail with respect to a prior art "non-swept back" suspension arrangement. Examiner is unclear what is being claimed if there is not a reference being made to a prior art "position" in claim 2.

With respect to Applicant's argument that Pond et al. does not teach or disclose a "central axle portion extending perpendicular to said longitudinal axis of symmetry over a width of the central body", and Pond et al. teach a "power transfer unit (80) which is much narrower than the vehicle body", Examiner disagrees and maintains the

rejection. As presently claimed, Applicant has only claimed a "vehicle having a central body" and a "central axle portion extending (perpendicularly).....over a width of the central body". This claim language does not require the central axle portion to extend "entirely across the width of the vehicle body". This language merely requires the central axle portion extend "over a width" of the central body and broadly is "in a width direction" or "a portion of the width". As stated in the rejection, the power transfer unit (80) of Pond et al. broadly has or includes a "central axle portion" extending perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of symmetry "over a width" of the central body.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Kumagai (USPN 4,413,701).


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George D. Spisich whose telephone number is (571) 272-6676. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00 to 6:30 except alt. Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on (571) 272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

George D. Spisich
April 24, 2006




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